New Books

The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy
By J. B. Schneewind
Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. xxii + 624, £50.00, £16.95.

Schneewind says that the primary inspiration for this remarkable and challenging book came from his feeling that 'there were many aspects of Kant's moral philosophy that [he] could not understand', and his belief that there would be a better chance of understanding these if we knew what questions Kant thought he had to answer (p. xiii). In pursuit of this goal he has, he says, had to go further back in history and to range more widely than he originally envisaged, but the result is a study of extraordinary richness and depth, full of detail but shaped by an overall vision and argument.

The argument overall is framed in terms of contrast between an earlier conception of morality as obedience and an emerging conception of morality as self-governance. 'On the older conception, morality is to be understood most deeply as one aspect of the obedience we owe to God'; whereas the 'new outlook that emerged by the end of the eighteenth century centred on the belief that all normal individuals are equally able to live together in a morality of self-governance. All of us, on this view, have an equal ability to see for ourselves what morality calls for and are in principle equally able to move ourselves to act accordingly. …' (p. 4). Schneewind says, I think rightly, that most contemporary moral philosophy assumes that morality has the form of self-governance, though I suspect that in doing so that philosophy doesn't always very well register the contours of ordinary moral consciousness which retains, I should say, very substantial elements of the attitude of obedience even should belief in God be not so widespread.

Following out this overall frame of account requires Schneewind to look closely at the many ways in which morality and religion are taken to be interconnected in the writings he assesses, but also to consider the epistemology and the moral psychology required by different moral outlooks, and these are recurrent saliences throughout his discussion. The treatment falls into four principal parts. The first considers the natural law view of morality (or, rather, the plurality of views within that general genre), dominant in the seventeenth century; the second, the morality of individual self-perfection, which also finds its most eloquent exponents in the same period. In the third part, he considers 'some efforts to show that morality can do without God', and in the final part, entitled 'Autonomy and divine order', Schneewind works directly towards his account of the questions Kant thought he had to deal with and an assessment of the significance of his answers once seen in the context of this problematic. He takes under review, and considers with exemplary clarity, incisiveness and firmness of judgment, a very large number of writers, some very familiar and very widely discussed—such as St. Thomas, Grotius, Locke, Hume, Spinoza, Rousseau among others—but also some much less known, such as Thomasius, Herbert of Cherbury, John Smith, Nicole and more. If noth-

ing else, and there is much else, this work is a repository of considerable learning and will be an invaluable source and guide for further work.

In considering the relations between morality and religion, Schneewind works generally with a contrast (familiar from the Euthyphro dilemma, which receives a brief mention on p. 552) between 'voluntarism' and 'intellectualism'. Roughly, voluntarism is the view that God's unfettered will determines what is right or wrong; intellectualism the view that humans are capable of identifying and knowing what is right or wrong without reference to God's will, and that God in his action will be governed by these same principles. He identifies the gradual dominance of the intellectualist view as a key element in the movement towards the conception of morality as self-governance, because without it the moral possibilities that appear to be present are those of 'tyranny and servility' (p. 510). Of course, even if God did not create mortality 'by a fiat of his own will', this by no means eliminates God from having a profound role in morality and the possibility of moral action. All sorts of possibilities are canvassed by the writers Schneewind considers. God's work may be required to assure us that we live in a morally ordered universe such that the good are rewarded and the bad punished (Wilde's definition of fiction); such issues bear closely also on the motives people have for moral action, though this raises well-known problems about the moral purity of such motivation and hence the fitness of the agent to receive reward. For Kant we are in moral community with God just because we share in the legislation of the law of pure practical reason we are to obey, and it is very much a Kant engrossed with this agenda generated by the earlier theorists grappling with the questions of the relation between God, man and morality that Schneewind gives us.

But there is more too than this. In Chapter 24, Schneewind asks what sort of point Kant saw philosophical ethics as having. Here, he suggests, there were two influential models. One suggests that the dominant point of moral philosophy is to seek and ground a comprehensive and systematic body of moral knowledge, based on secure first principles; this he calls the 'Socrates story'. In contrast, the second model suggests that the dominant point lies not in securing knowledge, which is in fact available to us, but rather in helping men to overcome their sinfulness, which not only obscures awareness of the moral truth but also affects our willingness to heed and act upon such truths. (Schneewind calls this the 'Pythagoras story' for the most interesting reasons that were not previously known to me.) Kant, Schneewind interestingly and importantly argues, basically espoused the Pythagoras story, but with less emphasis on the corruptions engendered by egoism concentrating rather more on distortions produced by a false estimate of our importance and of human powers. Schneewind himself argues for a more pluralistic approach to moral philosophy, in which it can properly have a range and diversity of aims and does not need to be seen as always engaged with the same, perennial questions.

There is a good deal of the discussion of this book which treats of material I am not well-versed in, and others will be better placed to comment on the detail of Schneewind's interpretations. Where I feel I can comment, I found his assessments always clear, well-judged and interesting but, as I

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would suppose is inevitable in a work of this scope, not perhaps always responsive to some of the detail or controversy that surrounds certain issues. Thus, for example, Schneewind seems to hold the view that Rousseau held that outside civil society there were, at best, 'enclaves of morality' (p. 478). This seems to me to neglect the very detailed and extensive account of the 'moral order' that Rousseau presents in *Émile*, a neglect I think abetted by Schneewind's apparent acceptance that *amour-propre* is treated throughout by Rousseau as corrupting. The many problems in giving a coherent account of Rousseau's thinking that this approach engenders are not, I think, successfully tackled by Schneewind. On the other hand, he quotes very fully from Kant's notes where he speaks of Rousseau, and in that way the beginnings of a more balanced picture emerge.

Returning now to Schneewind's overall design, he writes (p. 5) 'The early modern moral philosophy in which the conception of morality as self-governance emerged thus made a vital contribution to the rise of the Western liberal vision of the proper relations between individual and society. That form of life could not have developed without the work of moral philosophers.' It would be good to think that modern philosophizing could have such profound social and political effects, and I wouldn't want to deny its influence altogether. But I suspect that the changes in human self-understanding that find their articulation in works of moral philosophy are often set on foot by social processes which have their roots elsewhere. Issues of the possession of social and political power seem to me to have a larger role than Schneewind appears to allow. To say, as he does also on p. 5, 'In these matters [the moral, political, and religious aspects of life] we can only be what we think and say we are' is surely, questionable. One doesn't need to believe in the working out of World Spirit, or the operations of dialectical materialism, or anything like that to have a sense that the great shifts in 'ways of conceptualizing our humanity' begin and progress a good while before we can articulate what is going on and be able to grasp the shape of things to come.

This is a very impressive book indeed, an important contribution. It will provoke not only detailed discussion of Schneewind's particular assessments, but also much to be welcomed historiographical debates such that the history of moral philosophy is not seen as just a preparation for where we are now.

N. J. H. Dent

The Cambridge History of 17th Century Philosophy
By D. Garber and M. Ayers (eds)
Cambridge University Press, 1998, 2 volumes, pp. xvii+1616, £90.00 or $175.

This important work has been sixteen years in the making. It displays the immense sophistication of current writing in English on 17th century phi-

losophy. Indeed, the Cambridge history project is partly responsible for that sophistication. Since the early 1980s, the two editors and the contributors have together evolved an approach to the subject which is reflected not only in the two volumes under review, but in a considerable body of journal literature and in many books published in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as in conference activity of various kinds on both sides of the Atlantic. Often under the influence of this activity, but sometimes working independently of it, 17th century specialists who have not been involved in the Cambridge history have gone in its direction, so that the brief originally drawn up for the contributors—highly innovative and even daring in its day—is quickly turning into a new (and surely welcome) orthodoxy.

The new approach has been marked by three tendencies. First, there has been a willingness to locate 17th century philosophy within the wider political, economic, religious and intellectual culture of its time. Second, people have faced up to the fact that philosophy in the 17th century included all of the ancestors of the current natural sciences, some discarded nonsciences, and more than one humanistic discipline. It was not just metaphysics, logic and ethics. Third, the new approach has tended to range far beyond figures considered canonical by 20th century standards, or canonical in the 17th century philosophy itself. What ties together these tendencies is a growth of a distinctively *historical* consciousness: the contributors to the two volumes are more interested in the way a set of arguments or philosophical problems are characteristic of the period, than in the question of whether the arguments are sound or the problems genuine. Not that the new approach forbids people to ask about soundness or genuineness. But concerns with soundness and genuineness have often been pursued without an adequate *sense* of the the arguments or problems—because the interpretation imposed on the arguments and problems has come from latter day preoccupations and mythologies rather than from those of Descartes, Geulinx, Digby and Suarez. It is as an antidote to some 20th century heavyhandedness, especially the demonizing English-language commentary on Cartesian and Baconian 'mirrors of nature', or the 'atomistic liberal individualism' of Hobbes and Locke, that the new approach comes into its own.

Of course, the historical consciousness that marks the new historiography in English is not new on the Continent, and it might be thought that all one finds in these volumes is a movement toward the historiography of thirty or forty years ago in France, Holland, Italy and Germany. It is true that historians of philosophy writing in English have had to catch up with the mainland Europeans; in these volumes they have even joined forces: of the more than thirty contributors to the Cambridge history, two are French; one is Dutch; another is Scandinavian. Still, it would be a mistake to claim that historiography from the English-speaking world has nothing to teach the French, the Germans, the Dutch or the Italians. As evidenced in these two volumes, it sets high standards of clarity and explicitness,

some of which are inherited from the bad old ahistorical and logic-chopping days of analytic work in English on 17th century texts. There is less knowingness than one finds in Continental writing, but often quite as much knowledge. There is also, in the background, a different way of conducting collective research, one that incorporates submission to peer review and criticism as a matter of routine. To a far greater degree than their counterparts on the Continent, scholars in the English speaking world are willing to respond to demands for rewriting and revision, and, as the editors' preface and introduction make clear, the contributors to these volumes exchanged and revised and criticized work over a long period.

Seven broad themes are covered in the two volumes, each theme being divided into topics for individual articles. 'Body and the physical world'—the fourth of the seven themes—gets the most extensive treatment: eight articles in all, covering from many angles the early modern obsession with natural scientific explanation in terms of matter and motion. After this, the history turns to the nature of spirit (Theme 5); its cognitive powers and their limits (Theme 6); the human passions, voluntary action and the moral philosophies of the early moderns (Theme 7). The early thematic sections of the book are devoted to general historical context; early modern understandings of logic, language and abstract objects; and theories about God's nature, existence and His relation to created things.

One of the most useful sections in the book is the first, which sketches the general historical, institutional, and intellectual, background to early modern natural science, metaphysics, theology and morals. There is much in these three articles to inform the philosopher who knows 17th century, philosophy only from a handful of texts by Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Spinoza, and Leibniz. Tuck's highly readable article on the institutional setting makes clear just how little opportunity there was in Western Europe for following a career as a professional savant or philosopher. Unless one was a man, and a man of independent means at that, such as a Descartes or a Boyle, one usually needed a niche in a religious community or in a great aristocratic or royal household—for which one was expected to carry out a wide range of non-intellectual duties. There were few university posts, and holders of them were far from free to write or teach what they believed. Philosophy in the universities and colleges of the Renaissance was supposed to be studied as an introduction to the higher disciplines of theology, law and medicine. The relevant texts were often taken from Aristotle. But degree courses were organized differently and took different lengths of time in different parts of Europe, and there was a far from monolithic Aristotelianism for the early moderns to react against.The structure of European publishing also made a difference, and, among many other things, Tuck makes clear why Dutch publishers were so successful in bringing out editions of so many of the great works of the 1600s.

It is often thought that the early modern period was ushered in by philosopher/scientists who could not reconcile scientific observations with traditional physics, and whose attempts to innovate theoretically were policed by an intellectually reactionary Church wedded to the old author-

ities—Ptolemy, Galen, and, above all, Aristotle. Stephen Menn's excellent article on the intellectual background to early modern philosophy emphasizes the point that that there was considerable dissatisfaction with Aristotelianism and pressure for a new philosophy from the *theologians* for some time before observations in celestial and terrestrial physics started to call in question the Peripatetic philosophy. The theologians' reaction makes sense: on a natural reading of his texts, Aristotle seems to deny creation, the immortality of the soul, and divine intervention in terrestrial affairs. Plato and Platonist ideas seemed to some theologians to mesh better with the Faith, and battle lines were drawn between followers of Thomas and followers of Augustine, and between followers of both Thomas and Augustine on the one hand, and others who thought that a new philosophy had to be drawn direct from Plato, from further ancient sources, or from sources that were not ancient at all. There were humanists or sympathizers with humanism—sceptics, epicureans and stoics—who doubted the value of theoretical science in Aristotelian and other forms, and who promoted the cultivation of practical and moral knowledge independent of the search for causes or the deduction of effects. There were also 'naturalists'—such as Lipsius and Telesio—whose cosmologies had the effect of reducing the appeal to incorporeal substances in cosmological explanation and in the explanation of terrestrial phenomena in particular.

After the stage-setting articles of section 1 come a series on 'logic, language, and abstract objects'. The section-title has a strangely anachronistic ring, as if 20th century philosophical logic had suddenly intruded on highly sensitive history of ideas. But the articles themselves are firmly rooted in Aristotelian syllogistic and the various reforms of it proposed in 17th century philosophy. The 'problem of universals' has a place in this reform, and is taken up in a clear article by Martha Bolton. So has the discussion of the so-called 'principle of individuation'—discussed in a chapter by Udo Thiel. Something called 'method' was an important topic of Renaissance logic books: it often meant the ordering of considerations for the purpose of teaching. Sometimes 'method' meant a method of discovery as well, but explicit formulations of such methods, such as the four rules of Descartes's *Discourse on Method*, were often less illuminating than their supposed applications. The *Essays*, which Descartes's *Discourse* introduced were hardly applications of a single set of rules, and many far from evident hypotheses are introduced into the *Dioptrics*, in apparent violation of the first of Descartes's four rules. Peter Dear's chapter 7 is entitled 'Method and the study of nature'. It is a strangely pedestrian review of a variety of early to late 17th century attempts to articulate 'methods'. Dear overstresses Descartes's *Regulae*, and does not attempt to extract methodological precepts from the *Essays*. He suggests, I think incorrectly, that many writings on method attach a fairly constant cluster of meanings to the ubiquitous central distinctions between resolution and composition and analysis and synthesis. Recent literature questioning Watkins's interpretation of Hobbes as a warmed over Galilean methodologist is missed, and Descartes, Bacon and Locke are questionably expounded. Dear does man-

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age, however, to bring out an important contrast between writers with deflationary views of the powers of methodical enquiry, such as Mersenne, and the others who were willing to make great claims for the prospects of enquiry incorporating the right method.

Five articles on philosophical problems concerning God's existence and nature, and the relation of theology to other parts of learning occupy section 3. Marion, Armogathe and Lennon all stress the ways in which Descartes revised and unified some of the theological conceptions that were current before the 1630s. As is well known, Descartes insisted on the dependence of *all* existence and truth on God's will. Philosophers and theologians who believed that the truths of arithmetic and logic were true regardless of what God did were accused by Descartes of reviving heathen ways of thinking, and perhaps denying God's incomprehensible and unlimited power. Descartes also insisted on the perfection and infinity of God in ways that disrupted traditional theories. More, he put the question of the existence of God into a prominence previously reserved in theological work for the question of God's nature. On all of these matters Descartes's views provoked long and complicated debates, some carried on by sympathizers after his death. Prominent in the post-Cartesian reaction to Descartes's views about the nature and existence of God were Spinoza, Leibniz, and Malebranche, as well as a host of others—from Henry More to Regis and Desgabets. The section on God concludes with two survey articles by Jolley and Popkin on the relation between theology and philosophy, and on the religious background to 17th century thought, respectively. Both of these articles are valuable, but I wondered why they didn't come at the beginning of section 3. Another place for them might have been section 1.

I take the centrepiece of the Cambridge History to be section 4, the several hundred pages devoted to Body and the Physical World. Here is where the contributors come to grips with the much mythologized Scientific Revolution of the 17th century, and where they try to develop a measured account of a period of great intellectual innovation, cosmological insight, charlatanry, mysticism and much else. Two highly informative articles—on the scholastic background to natural philosophy in the 17th century, and on the occultist agenda of many savants, quacks and genuine natural scientists of the period, are followed by, and overlap considerably in content with, Stephen Nadler's workmanlike review of some of the main forays into mechanical explanation, and some of the perceived problems with that approach or set of approaches in the 17th century. Then comes an article by Garber, Henry, Joy and Gabbey on new doctrines of the relation of body to space. This covers atomism and other doctrines of body in a range of philosophers, some grouped together by country; others by the similarity of their theories. A large number of different views are canvassed, including those of the understudied English savants, Kenelm Digby and Walter Warner. The (for philosophers) more technical aspects of the mechanical philosophies of the period are taken up in the agreeably clear pieces by Gabbey on laws of motion and Mahoney on mathematization. Mahoney's paper is not intelligible at every point to a reader with little

mathematics, but its copiously illustrated theme is that the mathematizations inaugurated by Galileo, and developed by many other physicists, were inspired by engineering or craft practices and experience. What generalizations had emerged from the experience of machines could often be traced to the properties of geometrical figures abstractable from machine set-ups: the triangle of the inclined plane, curves, circles and spheres, and their tangents. Before the geometrical modelling of mechanisms, the idea that physics could be as mathematical as astronomy was entirely alien (vol. 1, p. 702).

It would take much, much more space than I have to expound in anything like the detail they deserve the articles in sections 5 to 7 of the Cambridge History. Chapters 23 to 27 take up the treatments in the 17th century of the various roles of the 'soul'—as principle of life, sensation and reason, as well as the beneficiary of salvation. Here as elsewhere, Descartes was a great innovator, reducing radically the number of these roles, and reassigning some of them to the body. Also as in other areas, Descartes's innovations are often rejected or refined by others, including the usual cast of characters—Spinoza, Gassendi, Leibniz, Hobbes, and also less well known figures, like Cordemoy and the Cambridge Platonists. Some of Descartes's tampering with the traditional doctrine of sensitive, vegetative and rational souls gets him into notorious problems of mind-body interaction, as well as commitments to the uniqueness of human beings in creation and in particular to their metaphysical separation from the animal and plant worlds. These matters are taken up in great detail in section 5. Descartes's innovative theory of the soul also constrains a novel account of the passions and the methods of controlling them, well discussed by Susan James.

One would expect the history to lavish attention on epistemology, and so it does—in section 6. There are some valuable expository articles, notably Gary Hatfield's map of the cognitive faculties recognized by the philosophy of the period. But the contributors also go to considerable lengths to challenge myths and received ideas, including ideas about the importance to the period of fresh epistemological starts. Ayer's chapter on theories of knowledge and belief convincingly challenges the influential idea that epistemological scepticism was the formative intellectual tendency. It also places some of the epistemological leanings of the leading figures of the period within a much longer tradition, counteracting the myth of the newness of thinking about knowledge and belief in the 17th century.

In the final section theories of action and the will are surveyed, and the reader is introduced to the principal approaches to moral philosophy, understood up to a point in questionable isolation from some of the social philosophy of the time. There are clear treatments of the different philosophical approaches to the nature of the will, and the strong determinist theories that multiplied during this period. The relationship between human nature and the virtues, and between natural and divine law theories of permissible and required behaviour, sin, evil and their punishment and reward are all considered, and there is a good article by Jill Kraye on the variety of ancient and medieval approaches to moral philosophy that 17th

century philosophers were sometimes trying to revise and sometimes trying to rupture.

A biobibliographical appendix at the end of the book allows readers to consult thumbnail sketches of some of the figures encountered in the body of the book. The canonical figures are written up, but so are others, including a number of women philosophers of the period. This part of the Cambridge History is the work of many hands, and there is a perhaps inevitable unevenness about it. The length of articles on women philosophers among the non-canonical figures seemed disproportionate to me, and was out of keeping with the emphasis on them in the body of the book. But this effect would have been counteracted best by more and longer entries on other non-canonical figures in general, not fewer and shorter items on women.

A work of this kind needs a good index, and the one supplied here could have been much better. The entries under the principal philosophers of the period are long lists of page numbers, and should have been divided by topic and cross-referenced. If there are subsequent editions, revision in this area must be counted a high priority. But there is no overstating the importance of these volumes as a resource for specialists and beginners alike. It has been worth the wait.

Tom Sorell

Appeal to Expert Opinion: Arguments from Authority
By Douglas Walton
University Park, Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, pp. xiv+291.

Locke, in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding,* distinguishes 'four sorts of arguments, that men, in their reasonings with others, do ordinarily make use of to prevail on their assent; or at least so to awe them as to silence their opposition' (4. xvii, 19). The first of these he called *argumentum ad verecundiam,* which seeks to gain assent for a proposition by playing on the listener's deference towards an authority who has asserted it. The name passed into the literature of logic text-books, as often as not as the name of a fallacy. This is Walton's starting point. But it is not always a fault of reason to appeal to an authority in the course of seeking to persuade an audience of some truth, though Locke himself, characteristically, took a dim view of the cognitive states such appeals may induce. 'For, I think, we may as rationally hope to see with other Mens Eyes, as to know by other Mens Understandings' (*Essay*, 1. iv. 23). Some appeals to authority or expert opinion, some arguments from authority, may be in order, and even where they should not *command* assent they may at times be properly used to incline an audience towards assent. In any case, there is not just one monolithic form of argument to which these descriptions apply, nor one kind of intention with which such appeals and arguments may be deployed.

This is the field Walton investigates in this book. It should perhaps be

emphasized that this *is* his topic. It may sometimes be confused with a different, near allied and, in my view, more fundamental topic, which philosophers have traditionally called *testimony.* It seems to me that it is confused in, for example, Walton's case 4.1 (p. 93). 'Case 4.1: Looking to the train schedule posted on the platform, we see that train 12 leaves shortly.... The schedule says that train 12 stops at Haarlem and Amsterdam Central Station'; and, so we are told, 'in effect, the schedule can be treated as an authoritative source in guiding one's actions'. So it can be and so it should be, but Walton claims that 'the form of reasoning used in case 4.1 is this: Everything E asserts on subject S is (or may be assumed to be) true. E asserts that A is true. Therefore, A is true'. This is contentious. It may be that in normal cases of this sort no form of reasoning is used at all and certainly not a form of deductive reasoning. What we are considering here is a rather rudimentary instance of informing or telling (testimony). *Perhaps*, as Walton implies, a rational being who comes by the belief that P on being told that P ('by an authoritative source') somehow *reasons* its way to this conclusion. I myself, however, am attracted to the view of Thomas Reid (notably absent from Walton's bibliography, along with other, more recent discussions of this issue of *testimony*). If Reid is right, it is natural in situations like (4.1) for the information contained in the schedule to be conveyed *directly* to the understanding reader, without the mediation of any reasoning. On his view, God (or, as others may prefer, evolution) has furnished human beings with a principle of credulity which disposes us simply to accept what we are told and which is matched by a principle of veracity which disposes us to tell the truth (see Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind*, ed. Timothy Duggan, University of Chicago Press: 1970, p. 240). So, happily, when people tell us things, instinct will most often ensure that we end up believing what is true, which is not to say that things cannot go wrong and there may not often be good reason to suspend this default response. Walton's case (4.1) is a good instance of one kind of case Reid was theorizing about. But one who interprets this schedule-reading situation as Walton does will assimilate even the most basic cases where we acquire beliefs from other people's say-so to the more sophisticated cases where say-so stands to be assessed and evaluated; these include the cases which centrally concern Walton, cases of explicit appeals to authority or expert opinion in the course of a persuasive argument, But at least we should start from the position that there are two separate issues, one concerning the way testimony fundamentally *works*, and one concerning the way we should, in certain contexts, approach its *evaluation* as evidence. Perhaps the assimilation is correct, but this is something for philosophical argument, particularly in the light of recent discussions (cf., for one important example, Tyler Burge, 'Content preservation' in *Phil. Rev. 102* (*1993*)), it should not be assumed to be correct.

At all events, Walton's real topic is explicit appeals to authority, and it is an important one. As he remarks 'appeal to authority is an extremely powerful and commonly used type of argumentation that affects the most intimate decisions we make in our everyday deliberations' (p. 29). Sadly, he

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approaches this subject pretty much in the style of a diligent but heavy-handed PhD student. Once the topic has been identified, we are treated to a selective historical overview (from which Hume is another remarkable absentee, though much of his work on the credibility of miracles is, in effect, a classically sharp and succinct contribution to this discussion). And then the critical work is undertaken, largely through a dogged review of the text-book literature. At the end of the day Walton has some sensible suggestions, and a good strategy for evaluating appeals to authority. The idea is that we approach these appeals armed with a set of critical questions. Six general types are identified (p. 223). We should consider the *expertise* of the 'expert'—how credible are they?; *the field*—does the expertise properly relate to the field in question?; the *opinion*—what has the 'expert' said that is relevant to the issue?; *trustworthiness*—how trustworthy is the 'expert'?; *consistency*—is the opinion consistent with those of other experts in the field?; and *backup evidence*—is the opinion based on evidence? Under each of these general types more particular critical questions should be asked. For example, under the first it will often be appropriate to demand that the 'expert' be named, and their official position, qualifications etc. be spelt out. This is all admirable common sense; it's a shame that its presentation is rather laboured.

This book will be valuable (even indispensable) for anyone who wishes to pursue research in this area, for its extensive literature surveys. Sadly, I think it lacks the bite and sharp focus I would hope to find in a piece of first-order philosophizing on an important topic. There are, moreover, signs of haste, or at least of perfunctoriness in the writing, Not every reference is honoured in the bibliography—for example Shoesmith and Smiley (1980) on p. 104. There appears to have been a politically correct attempt to substitute the feminine for the masculine gender, but it has not always been carried through successfully, even within a single sentence, see pp. 226–8 for some cracking examples—e.g. (226) 'the proponent … backs up her argument with an appeal to … an expert opinion that supports his argument'.

Above all, in a book on this topic one might hope the author would not transgress his own precepts, but in one case at least it seems to me that Walton does. Questioning the quality of evidence for so-called recovered memories of childhood abuse, he writes, 'there have been grave doubts on this score, expressed forcefully by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, a group of distinguished psychologists and psychiatrists who do not agree that recovered memory should be counted as reproducible scientific evidence.' But this appeal to 'expert' opinion should be as stringently interrogated by his critical questions as the 'expert' opinions which are being contested. One of the virtues of Walton's approach is precisely that his critical questions may be used to puncture the rhetoric of sweeping unspecific appeals to authority like this. So, we should ask, who are these distinguished psychologists and psychiatrists? What qualifications and experience makes them credible authorities in this domain? The truth is that where there is a battle of experts (and this is a particularly sharp example) there is no hope of finding some algorithm by which we can set-

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tle the dispute one way or the other. But Walton well articulates the sorts of questions that should be brought to bear by reasonable people who need to come to a view.

Michael Welbourne

Moral Truth and Moral Tradition
Edited by Luke Gormally
Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994, pp. ix + 246, £35.00.

In Stephen Pyke's catalogue of photographs *Philosophers* (Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications, 1993), seventy-eight figures are portrayed. Four of them appear both singly and in husband and wife pairs: Baroness and (the late) Sir Geoffrey Warnock, and Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter Geach. The double portrait of the latter couple also features on the front cover. Together they sit: inseparable from one another and immovable from the Catholic faith to which, independently, they found their way in Oxford in 1938. Each has previously been honoured by a philosophical festschrift (C. Diamond and J. Teichman (eds), *Intention and Intentionality: Essays in Honour of G. E. M. Anscombe* (Brighton: Harvester, 1979); and H. Lewis (ed.), *Peter Geach: Philosophical Encounters* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991)). Unusually, the present collection of essays is a celebration of the couple's fifty years of marriage and intellectual collaboration.

All the authors are co-religionists, sharing Anscombe and Geach's orthodoxy and respect for the rigorous moral theology and Thomist philosophy of the Catholic tradition. (The most frequently cited author is Aquinas, followed by Aristotle). Cardinal Daly of Armagh provides an admiring, though clear-eyed, foreword. Of Anscombe he writes 'Personally I had both chastening experience of Elizabeth's frankness and encouraging experience of her generosity. Once she wrote to me in reference to something I had written about Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and bluntly and rightly named it the nonsense which it was. Another time in reference to something I wrote about British moral philosophy, she was so kind as to say to a novice philosopher such as I was that she wished she had written a sentence she cited from my piece—and might herself do so at some future time! I felt hugely flattered'. Doubtless a number of readers have had similar experiences.

Luke Gormally has assembled thirteen authors contributing essays under four headings: *Tradition and Truth*—Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Moral Relativism, Truth and Justification'; Fernando Inciarte, 'Discovery and Verification of Practical Truth'; Andrzej Póltawski, 'The Epistemological Locus of Moral Values'; *Human Fulfilment, Divine Love, and Virtue*—Benediet Ashley, 'What is the End of the Human Person? The Vision of God and Integral Human Fulfilment'; Brian Davies, 'How is God Love?'; Christopher Martin, 'Virtues, Motivation and the End of Life'; *Responsibility and Intention*—Robert Spaemann, 'Christian Ethics of

Responsibility'; Joseph Boyle, 'The Personal Responsibility Required for Mortal Sin'; John Finnis, 'On Conditional Intentions and Preparatory Intentions'; *Sex, Marriage and Children*—Mary Geach, 'Marriage: Arguing to a First Principle in Sexual Ethics'; James McEvoy, 'Friendship within Marriage: A Philosophical Essay'; Anselm Müller, 'Has Moral Education a Rational Basis?'; and David Braine, 'The Human and the Inhuman in Medicine: Review of Issues Concerning Reproductive Technology'.

The essays most likely to be of interest to readers of *Philosophy* are those by MacIntyre, Martin, Finnis, Müller, and Braine—this for reasons of style as well as of content. Each is broadly analytic in approach, eschews theological premises, and engages issues familiar in secular moral philosophy. MacIntyre is concerned to square the plurality of moral traditions with the unity of moral truth. Martin explores the thesis, associated with Anscombe/Geach/Foot style ethical naturalism, that right action is the exercise of virtue whose rationale derives from its relation (instrumental or constitutive) to human good. Finnis discusses the difference between conditional and unconditional intentions arguing that it is of little import in legal contexts and more generally that the thing to focus on is the character forming (and firming) significance of all intentions. Müller argues that moral education lacks foundations in the same way and to the same extent that morality itself lacks them. His viewpoint is not sceptical but Wittgensteinean: fundamental moral convictions themselves provide the necessary context for moral justification. Braine develops another aspect of neo-Aristotelian ethical naturalism, namely the idea that we are rational animals whose good is defined in part by our bodily nature.

The same notion is at work in Mary Geach's interesting essay on marriage—triply in the context of the collection, given its celebratory intention, the fact that she is a daughter of the honorands, and the imaginative and forceful character of the piece illustrated by the following: 'Some modern philosophers, such as Singer, think that there is no morality specially having to do with matters sexual ... that there is no more a special sexual morality than there is a special motor car morality ... [But] in our list of things that are ordered well in every well-ordered human being, we have to include his sexuality, but not his ability to drive. ... A non-driver is not as it were a celibate, channelling his driving instincts into other activities'.

James McEvoy is also concerned to relate the Christian sacrament of marriage to something of universal human value, namely friendship. Indeed, Natural Law appears in various guises throughout the collection though it is not always identified as such. Müller's invocation of Wittgenstein invites a localized reading of the claim that 'it is part of man's nature to live by self-regarding and other-regarding rationality' but if this is to do any work in the face of relativism it needs to be understood just as Aristotle or Aquinas would have interpreted it.

This raises an interesting question about the attempt to deploy premodern ideas while taking account of modern ways of thinking. One of the leading figures in Thomistic ethical theory and moral theology is Germain Grisez. At first on his own and then in collaboration with Finnis and

Boyle, he developed what is sometimes referred to as 'New Natural Law Theory'. While teleological in character this posits a plurality of incommensurable natural goods or ends, and affirms a version of the autonomy of ethics. The combination is interesting but I am not surprised that a traditional Thomist such as Benedict Ashley is suspicious. His essay raises a number of good questions about the new wine in an old bottle, though it presumes (reasonably in this context) an interest in the idea that the final end of man is the beatific vision of God.

New and old are also combined in the opening contribution, viz., MacIntyre's 'Moral Relativism, Truth and Justification'. The lead position is well deserved, for as well as being of quality and interest this essay is important for MacIntyre's general project and it engages the central question for moral philosophy, namely whether moral claims are or can be true. Additionally, it builds on a position which, though it shares features with views of Anscombe and Geach actually stands in contrast to them. There is an unnoticed irony, therefore, in the fact that MacIntyre draws on an argument previously deployed by Geach in order to defend his own position from the challenge of relativism.

In *After Virtue* MacIntyre advanced the Anscombean thesis that modern moral thinking is a confusion of concepts drawn from different traditions. Furthermore he argued, along with Anscombe and Geach, that coherence can be achieved by relating morality, in particular the virtues, to an account of human life as teleologically ordered. However unlike the Oxford neo-Aristotelians he rejected as unacceptable 'metaphysical biology' the notion of human nature as something antecedent to contingencies of time and culture. His alternative has been to construct an account of moral coherence in terms of historically extended, social practices. However if standards of moral assessment are only immanent within particular traditions then how is relativism to be avoided?

MacIntyre's response has been to argue that a tradition may run into moral-cum-philosophical difficulties, recognize this fact without having the intellectual resources to overcome it, yet still be able to appreciate that another tradition has the wherewithal to diagnose and resolve the problems of the first tradition. This provides a way of understanding the intellectual superiority (in the relevant respects) of one tradition over another. Moreover, since the defining goal of enquiry is truth, a recognition of superiority is to be understood as an acknowledgement of greater proximity to a common (non-tradition-specific) goal.

This much will be familiar to readers of MacIntyre's recent books. The novelty introduced in the present essay is the use of the 'Frege/Geach point' in an attempt to clinch the anti-relativist conclusion. Truth is conceptually linked to assertion in as much as the latter is the act of presenting as true. But inferential validity requires that the meaning of what is presented remains constant whether it is actually asserted or not. Resolving for consistency we must suppose that whatever may be asserted and enter into inferential relations is at least truth apt. Moving on from this MacIntyre concludes that justifiability has to be understood in terms of truth and not vice versa.

I am not sure how this is likely to be received by non-analytical readers of the book, but many of those familiar with contemporary Anglo-American philosophy will be aware that deployment of the Frege/Geach point has been the subject of much recent discussion. The jury is still out, but an interim assessment suggests that the notion of truth required to accommodate it is quite a thin one—perhaps no more than a criterion of prepositional form or a quasi-syntactic principle of discourse. At any rate much more needs to be done to show that truth so conceived is something that implies conformity to objective fact. (MacIntyre quotes the old scholastic definition of truth as *adequatio intellectus ad rem*—proportioning of the mind to the object, or in the Thomistic version conformity of the intellect to reality).

A move in that direction would be to think about what other work a notion of truth might have to do; and recalling Davidson's account of radical interpretation as involving holding true one might see it as a necessary element in making sense of human behaviour. But that suggests a return to something like a universalist philosophical anthropology—just what MacIntyre rejected but Anscombe and Geach appeared to think was appropriate (and perhaps necessary) to ground a teleological ethic of virtue.

This book is published by a Dublin-based press associated with theology and Irish history; all of its contributors are Catholics and few are likely to be known to readers of *Philosophy* and similar journals. These facts are bound to affect its circulation and limit the extent to which its content are read and discussed. Yet it contains several pieces of lasting value and is certain to be of interest to those who admire Anscombe and Geach. I also hope that it might inspire someone to write a book about their work. That would be particularly valuable in the case of Anscombe whose profundity has often left readers perplexed. Indeed as Geach himself has remarked 'she gets bold and at first sight merely zany ideas to which I sometimes reacted with initial outrage'. The image of the two of them in discussion is an engaging one.

John Haldane

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